

Covers Full Cost of College for Children of Troops Who Have Died in Line of Duty Since 9/11, Named After Lorena Marine with 3 Young Children

(Waco, Texas) – [Congressman Chet Edwards](#) announced that Department of Veterans Affairs will begin accepting applications May 1st

for
The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, which Edwards authored and was signed into law last year. The “Fry scholarship” expands the current GI Bill education benefit to cover the full cost of a college education for children of service members who have died on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Edwards named the new scholarship in honor of a fallen Iraq war Marine with three young children from his district.

Edwards, Chairman of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs

Appropriations Subcommittee, said, “Nothing can make up for the loss of a parent, but my hope is that the Fry scholarship will honor those who gave their lives in defense of our nation by ensuring that their children can receive a college scholarship. This legislation is as meaningful to me as anything I’ve ever passed because no one is more deserving of our nation’s support than children whose moms or dads have given their life in military service to our nation.”

One such parent was Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, of Lorena, Texas, a dedicated soldier who saved countless lives by disarming numerous bombs, including one of the largest car bombs found in Fallujah. On March 8, 2006, after being cleared to return home, Sergeant Fry volunteered to defuse one more explosive device in Anbar province, Iraq. He found three bombs that night and defused all of them, but the fourth took his life. As one of Edwards’

constituents, the congressman met Fry’s widow Malia and their three small children, Kathryn, Gideon, and C.L at a Veterans Day memorial in 2007, and was deeply moved by the depth of their sacrifice. After speaking at a ceremony renaming a post office for Sergeant Fry in March of 2009, Edwards felt that more had to be done to honor the Fry family and military families like them.

“Sergeant Fry wasn’t the only one to sacrifice for his country that night. His three children lost their loving father and his wife lost her husband,” **said Edwards**. “Having represented Fort Hood for the first 14 of my 19 years in Congress and through three combat deployments, I have seen firsthand the sacrifice of our military families, who are truly the unsung heroes of our nation’s defense.”

Fry Scholarship

- All children of an active duty member of the Armed Forces who has died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible for 36 months of tuition and fees up to the maximum in-state tuition and as well as a monthly living stipend, and book allowance.
- VA will begin accepting applications for this benefit May 1st 2010. The benefit went into effect August 1, 2009, and VA must begin making payments no later than August 1, 2010 including retroactive payments for eligible children enrolled in college during the period of August 1, 2009 through July 31, 2010.
- Benefit expires 15 years after 18th birthday of surviving military children.
- For more information, visit the VA website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call

1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-88-442-4551)

Background on Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry:

Born in Lorena in 1977, John David Fry joined the Marines to serve his country at the age of 18. At the time, the Marines were looking for a few good men. In him they found the best of the best. Sergeant Fry chose to become an explosive ordinance disposal technician, an EOD, to protect the lives of his fellow Marines.

In September of 2005, Sergeant Fry was deployed to Iraq with the 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. While in Iraq, Sergeant Fry saved countless lives by rendering safe numerous bombs, including one of the largest car bombs found in Fallujah. He once went into a home to find a bomb strapped to an intellectually disabled young Iraqi boy, who had been beaten and chained to a wall. Sergeant Fry, the father of three young children under the age of 10, risked his life to save the life of someone else's child in a foreign land. That is the kind of person he was.

Sergeant Fry turned down a Bronze Star and a ticket out of Iraq after a serious wound. He said he just wanted to do his duty. He was proud to be a Marine and proud to serve his country. Seven short days before this 28-year-old Marine was to be sent back home to his family, he volunteered, when he didn't have to, to defuse three more explosive devices, this time in Al Anbar province. Sergeant Fry found three bombs that night and defused all of them, but the insurgents had hidden a fourth bomb. It exploded and this brave Marine who had saved so many lives, finally gave his own life.

Sergeant Fry wasn't the only one to sacrifice for his country that night. His mother lost a son. His wife lost her husband, and his three children lost their loving father. Only the heart can measure the depth of that kind of sacrifice. Sergeant Fry's widow Malia, and his children, Kathryn, Gideon and C.L., might not have worn our nation's uniform, but they have surely served our country through their deep, personal sacrifice.

The Fry College Scholarship not only honors the sacrifice of America's fallen heroes, it honors the sacrifice of their surviving children and widows.

Edwards co-chairs the House Army Caucus, and serves as the Chairman of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee.